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ABSTRACT

In July 1972, Mexican American educators attended a meeting in San Francisco, California, called by the National Institute of Education (NIE) Planning Unit. Purpose of the meeting was to inform these Chicano educators about plans for the new Federal agency, which was created in parallel with the U.S. Office of Education (USOE) and took over the research and development functions of the USOE. Copies of the proposed legislation creating the new agency and other planning documents were given to the participants. Representatives of the NIE Planning Unit gave an official explanation. Participants agreed to assemble a set of papers presenting a preliminary Chicano reaction to the plans read and heard. Written by 5 Mexican educators attending the meeting, the papers reflect "serious reservations and important recommendations made by the group". These 5 papers, given in this document, are entitled: (1) "Comments on the Proposal to Establish A National Institute of Education"; (2) "The Myth of Compensatory Education"; (3) "A Chicano View of the National Institute of Education"; (4) "A Brief Criticism"; and (5) "National Institute of Education". (NQ)

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CHICANO EDUCATION AND THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

Report of a Planning Conference
for the NIE Planning Unit

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CHICANO EDUCATION AND THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION

Ralph Guzman

The following papers were written by five Chicano (Mexican-American) educators who attended a July 1972 meeting in San Francisco, California, called by the National Institute of Education (NIE) Planning Unit. The purpose of the meeting was to inform a group of Chicano educators about plans for the new federal agency, which would be created in parallel with the present U.S. Office of Education and take over the research and development function of the latter agency. The Chicano educators received copies of the proposed legislation creating the new agency and other planning documents. They also heard an official explanation by John Mays and Gail Parks representing the NIE Planning Unit.

The Chicano participants argued that they needed more time and resources to examine the proposed design of NIE and intelligently measure the agency's possible impact upon the education of Chicano children. They agreed, however, to assemble a set of papers which would present a preliminary Chicano reaction to plans read and heard. The papers were written quickly without time and without funds. They do reflect, nevertheless, serious reservations and important recommendations made by the group about the proposed NIE.

In many arguments that are made, one general objection seems clear. The NIE cannot possibly succeed as an effective agency if it overlooks the unique educational needs of the Chicano population.

COMMENTS ON THE PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH A NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

Ernesto Galarza

Recommendations of subjects for research, development and programming at this time would be premature. These should be determined after the question is answered: where can an agency of such limited resources concentrate them to make the present educational establishment more responsive and effective? Rather than commit itself to "comprehensive national programs," the NIE ought to consider how it can become a comprehensive national force that would be applied to the major resistance points of the educational establishment.

Great care should be taken in adopting the Research and Development concept as the keystone of the NIE. R&D developed in response to the market requirements and the competitive character of industrial management. Education did not. The assumption that an R&D of industrial origin can rationalize educational "growth" has to be examined critically. Failure to do so could prepare the way for acceptance of the Gross National Product in education.

It is a characteristic of good research in education that it yields (a) clinical data about persons thwarted in their development culturally, and (b) correlations of factors that improve the chance for development. If the data are clinical, the scope of the research must be adjusted to the clinical situation and its application hastened to requirements for relief of the situation. If it is correlational, the object should be to remove the obstacles that prevent a new and more effective synthesis of resources.

On the development side of R&D, it should be stressed that education deals with the development of persons and of those types of relations between them which foster a sociology of learning providing for growth beyond self. How is two-fold development of this kind to be observed, recorded and evaluated? Development, in the R&D formula of industrial development, has been concerned mainly with new products as things. In education it can only be appropriate if it is concerned with the human development of persons. On this premise, R&D in education should mean examination of the processes by which children are presently being educated, the goal being to discard those that hinder and to discover better ones that promote such development.

The formal, institutional processes of education to which children are exposed are not the only ones that condition their growth. The family, spontaneous peer groups, the media, and stereotypes of adult behavior are powerful educational agents. The R&D of NIE should not be reluctant to investigate these factors of the total cultural matrix for plus and minus values. It has been said that research is the last resort of institutions that are in trouble. The rationale of research can become an endless series of postponements of decisions and actions. The idea of final truth is an illusion that discounts the value of tentative truth derived from research already in hand. It is to be hoped that NIE will take its chances in supporting corrective action where the facts already known show that some negative condition is at work in the education of Mexican-American children.

In the social sciences, research is apt to behave as if its results will be self-evident and its conclusions self-enacting. But if research leads to a criticism of an existing educational process because it obstructs the personal and social fulfillment of children, the research scheme should consider the strategies by which cultural inertia is to be overcome.

If development in education is viewed as suggested above, the understanding of the political conditions required for reform is particularly important in the Mexican-American community. Mexican parents, for historical reasons, are particularly remote from the educational establishment. Does NIE propose to raise the subject of the enlightenment of this constituency, as research indicates (or has already indicated) the direction of that enlightenment?

NIE seems to be captivated by the idea that only those programs for educational action should be funded that can be replicated on a national scale. A successful demonstration in one community, it is held, can have a high multiplier effect if the problem attacked is widely prevalent. This is an economic approach—the greatest return for the lowest investment. Does this not mean that NIE will have to spend much of its effort and funding on researching the national field to determine what are the chronic educational problems that are common to *all* Mexican-American communities? Does this mean that NIE will not be ready to take significant actions until it is ready to do so on a national scale?

American educational systems work with a very large degree of political autonomy. Property interests and fiscal conservatism are rooted in this autonomy. Administrative prudence bows to them, teachers cringe before them and parents rise to deal with them only in time of crisis. In the Mexican-American community there is no continuing and sustained effort to educate parents about education. Rather than being dogmatic, this education about education can be a reasoned, documented explanation of alternatives. What substitutes for the PTA and school bond manipulations does NIE propose to study as ways to educate parents?

It is hardly debatable that the children of America are being increasingly regarded by some sectors of the American economy as (a) a vast potential audience for entertainment and (b) a promising growth market for industrial products. Mexican-American children are not excluded from these projections. Does NIE expect to raise any questions in this connection?

The distribution of federal funds for R&D, as well as the dissemination of ideas emerging from R&D and the administration of programs based on such R&D, takes place through the established network of schools of education, state departments of education, school districts and educational laboratories. These institutions have not formed dynamic groupings with the Mexican-American communities. Does NIE propose to filter its R&D through this traditional network, with its rather sterile history? One of the major accomplishments of federal grants for educational reform and innovation through this filter has been to co-opt Mexican-American educators and immerse them in the sluggish "mainstream" of school administration. NIE will no doubt require Mexican-American professionals for its staff. To what end?

THE MYTH OF COMPENSATORY EDUCATION

Tom Arciniega

In recent years, compensatory education has provided the model for the development of programs aimed at minority populations. The growing rejection of this premise is perhaps best summarized by Ivan Illich:

> Between 1965 and 1968 over three billion dollars were spent in U.S. schools to offset the disadvantages of about six million children. . . It is the most expensive compensatory program ever attempted anywhere in education, *yet no significant improvement can be detected in the learning of these 'disadvantaged' children.* (Italics mine.) (*Deschooling Society.* New York, Harper and Row, 1970, pp. 4-5).

The literature documenting the failure of the compensatory model has grown rapidly. Gordon, Hamilton, Brischetto and Arciniega, Ramirez, to name only a few, have criticized the preoccupation of the compensatory education movement with the identification of dysfunctional characteristics of the deprived and the view that almost any deviation from the majority culture is dysfunctional.

In 1970 the Texas Advisory Committee provided the impetus for the policy statement made by the office for Civil Rights which reflected the operational philosophy that school districts should provide a culturally relevant education such that the culture, language, and learning styles of all children are recognized and valued. (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, "Civil Rights in Texas." Washington, D.C., Government Printing Office, 1970.)

The mounting failure of the compensatory approach is being met with dismay:

> The frustration and anger of the lay critics of "education for minority-poverty children" because of the failure of schools to meet the demands for palpable evidence of success on any or all criteria is matched by the concern and despair of those professionals responsible for producing results. Rationalizations used in past years that the programs were too new, the funding too weak, the staffs too few and unprepared, the social problems too pervasive, are no longer acceptable to the community supporting the schools. (Adelaide Jablonsky, *Status Report on Compensatory Education.* Information Retrieval Center on the Disadvantaged. Teachers College, Columbia University. Winter-Spring 1971; Volume 7, Number 1-2, p. 1.)

The urgent need to move vigorously toward redirective change in the public educational system is clear. It is clear, too, at this point that we are not talking about small incremental changes in the institutional setting of the school, but rather redirective efforts that must be dramatic and broad-gauged. The challenge is clear: the times demand that we organize and use our schools to promote the type of society America "ought to be" and less a reflection of "what is."

The educational system which is suggested in accordance with this view should have as a basic organizational goal the promotion of cultural pluralism. Schools and universities would be structured to provide Chicano students with the basic knowledge, skills, and political awareness to work effectively within the societal institutions, while at the same time promoting positive institutional changes in the opportunity structure for the benefit of minority members. Bicultural schools with bicultural curricula would be essential basic elements of this type of school system. Both English and Spanish would be utilized at all levels as media of instruction with the specific intent to develop functional proficiency in both languages. Chicano culture would be reinforced along with the majority cultural system. Ideally, Chicanos and Anglos alike would complete their schooling able to function adequately in both languages and both cultural systems.

The focus of redirective efforts would be on changing the educational system to meet the needs of culturally different students. Changing the structure, curriculum, and normative "set" of the school system is seen as a more viable approach to educating *all* students than changing the child to "fit" the school. Schools would be representative of the communities they served in the ratio of minority administrators, teachers, and counselors. Special emphasis would be placed on developing schools as microcosms of the "ideal pluralistic" society.

The mounting of an alternative, more humanistic

paradigm to the compensatory view will be far from easy. It will require first a dedicated and substantial commitment on the part of federal, state and local agents and, more importantly, from people like ourselves. The road to travel is difficult and poorly illuminated in all too many cases, but we can be encouraged also that significant work has been going on despite our national overcommitment to the compensatory model.

Secondly, we will need to develop a clear rationale to include core assumptions and concepts. Some of the basic assumptions on which this new paradigm should be built include the following:

1. The roots of the educational problems of the Chicano are not culturally based.

2. The chief impediments to success by Chicanos in school cannot be attributed to deficient home or peer environments but to the various external restraint systems imposed on the group by virtue of its subordinate position in society.

3. The focus of research instruments should be shifted from the students' ethnic subculture to the structure of the educational and other societal institutions.

4. Educational systems must be restructured to reflect what "should be" and less "what is" in American society.

5. To be effective, changes in the educational system must be accompanied by changes in the political and economic sphere so that wealth and power are more equally distributed in society.

Third, we will need to carefully and systematically chart where we are in relation to where we need to go. Once established, the process of committing funds to stimulate needed development in priority areas can begin. The matrix in Figure 1 is a first attempt at providing a mechanism for charting the state of the art in the area of Education for Cultural Pluralism. Once all programs have been identified and classified as per our sixteen-cell scheme, it will be necessary to develop evaluative criteria for each category program. The organization and coordination of the R&D framework suggested above is a massive undertaking which can best be accomplished by the new National Institute of Education. Then a framework for early and timely dissemination of products, knowledge, and systems developed will need to be developed nationwide. This will require as a minimum the involvement and commitment of state departments of education, the community, and universities, as well as the actual public school systems using the products.

Fourth, academicians from a variety of disciplines will need to be involved. The problem of eradicating institutional racism, cultural bias and discrimination in education is an interrelated part of the total societal system. There is little to be gained from "tinkering" with schools without directing attention to the total milieu. Thus the need for interdisciplinary effort on a "cell by cell" basis (as noted above) is essential.

Last, in moving to effect these needed changes, we need to remember, particularly in working with schools and minority communities, that the process of involvement is equally as important as the product we're trying to "push." Genuine joint involvement of school and Chicano grassroots leadership is essential both because of the expertise all can provide and because only this approach will create the required receptivity and commitment.

	Collection of Basic Information and Data	Basic Research: Development of Relevant Theories	Development of Bicultural Education Problems	Development of Bicultural Training and Operation Systems
Early Childhood and Primary Education				
Intermediate and Secondary Education				
Community College and University Education				
Alternatives to Formal Education				

Fig. 1: Matrix for Classifying Development Efforts in the Area of the Education for Cultural Pluralism

A CHICANO VIEW OF THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

Juan Aragon

The general notion of having a super-structure such as NIE responsible for all research and development efforts in education in the U.S. at first glance appears to be a good one and, in fact, it could conceivably be a good one. There are, however, a series of factors that immediately spring to mind. All of these factors will, of necessity, be from the point of view of someone interested in the Spanish-speaking citizens of the U.S. The first question that arises is will NIE duplicate or replace some of the R&D activities currently underway in the Office of Education? The creation within OE of Title VII was long fought for and finally realized. Will NIE conduct research on bilingual education in addition to that being done by Title VII? Or will the Title VII R&D funds be transferred to NIE? If it is to be the latter, then the Spanish-speaking community will have to develop a new set of dialogues with the new agency. This will call for the investment of energies that the community may not wish to reinvest.

What implications will NIE have for the Office of Spanish-Speaking Affairs within the Office of Education? Will a division similar to this one be duplicated within NIE? Or will that office by preempted by NIE?

If it is the intention of NIE not to supersede, preempt, or even duplicate any of the above services, then a series of other questions immediately come to mind. What kind of input will the Spanish-speaking community have to NIE? The legislation refers to a Board of Advisors. As of this date the Spanish-speaking community is not aware of: (1) the procedure to be followed in nominating people to the Board of Advisors; (2) the selection process to be used in selecting from the nominees those that will actually serve on the Board of Advisors; and (3) how many slots, if any, will be apportioned to the Spanish-speaking community. The same series of questions as mentioned above applies to the nomination and selection of the Director of NIE.

The staffing job that NIE faces is of crucial interest to the Spanish-speaking community. It needs to know what kind of built-in talent from its own community will be included in the staff. Does NIE intend to guarantee built-in talent from the Spanish-speaking community, or will it depend on casually called meetings to be held periodically, where selected spokesmen for the community will be asked to react to predetermined proposals?

The NIE planning procedures to date give little assurance that the Spanish-speaking community was considered an essential factor in NIE planning. Two examples to support this can be cited. (1) It is our understanding that all meetings prior to the one held in San Francisco on Thursday, July 20, 1972, included representatives from diverse groups. That is as it should be. To our knowledge, there was not one Chicano included in any of the discussions prior to July 20. (2) The Rand Report, edited by Roger E. Levien, makes several references to the needs of the culturally different. Then one discovers Appendix C on page 164: "Individuals and Organizations Consulted During Preliminary Planning for the National Institute of Education." The list of people and organizations does not include one person or organization with a demonstrated track record of community service to, or interest in, the Chicano people. The list of persons providing written comments on the Draft Plan, which begins on page 172, is equally bereft of Chicano contributions. More careful reading of the list of people reveals the name of Ramon Mellado, Secretary of Education for the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. It certainly is not the intention of this statement to diminish Dr. Mellado's contributions. On the contrary, we are pleased that he was included. But we are not sure that Dr. Mellado is knowledgeable about the educational problems of the Chicano people. How similar are the problems of Puerto Ricans living on the island to those encountered on the Mainland? Assuming that some relationship and similarities could be established between educational needs in Puerto Rico and on the Mainland (a very dangerous assumption), one can be sure that their relationship to the ten million members of the Chicano community cannot be easily established.

Unfortunately, the enthusiasm that one would feel for NIE's potentially new and refreshing look at educational R&D is quickly blunted when we note who was consulted and involved in its planning. It is our impression that the same intellectual establishment that

has caused us great injury in the past imposed itself on the educational thinking that went into NIE. It would seem that NIE could become a new and powerful agency that would disavow intellectual colonialism which has failed to produce results or show interest in the desperate educational problems of the Spanish-speaking people.

The second article given us to read in San Francisco, entitled, "Program Planning for the National Institute of Education: A Summary of Four R&D Analyses," is a continuation of the Levien Report. It should be noted, as we criticize that document, that there is no intent to cast aspersions on the sincerity or competence of those involved to date. Those listed and those who presented papers are well known to all of us as reputable scholars. One, however, cannot help reacting to the continued audacity of excluding input from scholars who are developing theories and research needs in other areas, areas that might not be as ethnocentric as they at first appear. They should be perceived not only as scholarly pursuits but also concerns of a patriotic nature. The United States is the fifth largest Spanish-speaking country in the world. Its Spanish-speaking population is exceeded only by the populations of Mexico, Spain, Argentina and Peru. Spanish is the second most common sound system found in America. America is that expansive land mass that extends from the North Pole to Tierra del Fuego. It appears that, by the year 2000, Spanish could supersede English in the Western Hemisphere. Twenty-five years after that, it could be the most common language in the Western world. This country needs to nurture its Spanish-speaking resources if for no other reason than to communicate in what will quickly become this hemisphere's most popular language. It behooves the United States (and NIE) to address itself to the educational problems of the Spanish communities of this country.

As a result of these concerns, the following are offered as recommendations to NIE.

1. A complete bibliography on the educational and social needs of the Spanish-speaking community should be gathered and analyzed.

2. A meeting of Mexican and Puerto Rican scholars should be called in a conference that is meticulously planned and at which papers will be presented, much as the prior conferences were conducted.

3. Assurances should be given concerning continuous input by the Spanish-speaking community as further steps are taken to form NIE.

4. The procedures for the selection of the Advisory Board and the Director should be reported to the Spanish-speaking community and the intentions for its involvement clearly stated.

5. The Spanish-speaking community of this country should be asked to withhold further participation in NIE activities until responses are received to the first four recommendations.

A BRIEF CRITICISM

Reyes Ramos

The purpose of this paper is to present a brief criticism of NIE and to recommend what NIE might consider if it is serious about solving some of the educational problems Mexican Americans face. A careful reading of Levien's preliminary plan for NIE reveals that an implied objective of NIE is to accomplish what the Office of Education, or for that matter any federal office concerned with education, has not been able to do. The goal of NIE, as outlined in the Levien report, will be to reform and improve education in the United States through research and development. This is, indeed, an ambitious undertaking and one anybody interested in education hopes can become a reality.

However, many of us who are aware of the stated or implied goals, intentions, and priorities of the different federal agencies are skeptical that NIE will accomplish its implied objective. This is true for several

reasons. First, many of the departments within the Office of Education, such as the Office of Child Development (OCD) had and still have similar goals and good intentions as NIE has now. Second, other federal agencies, such as those within the Office of Education, started out as ambitiously as NIE to improve and reform education, but as yet they have made little difference. Third, the structure of NIE as presented in the Levien report is similar to the structure of those other federal agencies that have not succeeded as originally planned. Fourth, NIE is starting out in the same manner as the other federal agencies that have not succeeded. That is, NIE, like the other federal agencies interested in educational reform, is starting out by staffing and calling upon the "same" established educators with the "same" ideas that have not worked in the past and by using lesser known people only on a consulting basis instead of on a more permanent basis. In summary, NIE, if it really intends to make a difference in education in general, might start out by hiring people with different ideas.

Specifically, as educators and as Mexican Americans, we believe that NIE will not make a difference in the quality of education Mexican Americans receive. The following are some of our reasons.

1. In the Levien report, nothing is said about how Mexican Americans will participate in the selection of the Director of NIE and in the selection of its advisory council. It is not stated how many members of the advisory council will be Mexican Americans.

2. NIE has excluded Mexican Americans from its preliminary planning. A reading of the list of the people consulted during its preliminary planning reveals that not one Mexican American was consulted.

3. To date, Mexican American participation has been at a rather insignificant level. Seven people were asked by NIE to produce in a two-day conference a preliminary plan on the educational needs of Mexican Americans. A comprehensive plan cannot be produced in two days. The head of the planning unit of NIE should know that any serious consideration on how to solve some of the educational problems of Mexican Americans cannot be seriously addressed in a paper written in two days.

What might NIE do if it is seriously to consider solving some of the educational problems Mexican Americans face? We propose the following three things.

1. NIE must include Mexican Americans in all its planning stages.

2. NIE must define specifically how much money it will appropriate for Mexican American projects.

3. If NIE is going to attend to the educational programs Mexican Americans face, it must hire Mexican American educators for a reasonable length of time to write a serious plan in which the problems and possible strategies to solve those problems are delineated.

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

Manuel Ramirez III

Research and development programs which have concerned themselves with the problems of the culturally different have typically adopted one basic orientation. They have viewed the cultures of minority ethnic groups (and especially those of the peoples of La Raza, blacks, native Americans and Asians) as interfering with the intellectual and emotional development of children. That is, they have adopted a culture-is-damaging orientation in doing research with and developing educational strategies and materials for the culturally different. Furthermore, they have adapted theories and strategies which glorify the cultural values and life styles of the mainstream American middle class. The consequence of all this has been the rejection of cultural democracy in the educational process.

Examination of two documents on the National Institute of Education (*Program Planning for the*

National Institute of Education: A Summary of Four R&D Analyses, and *National Institute of Education: Preliminary Plan for the Proposed Institute*) indicate that this agency is in danger of perpetuating the culture-is-damaging and exclusionist melting pot orientation of previous R&D efforts. The fact that very few people who are critical of the aforementioned orientations were consulted in the planning stages and the proposed procedures for selection of the director and the council indicate that this fear is well founded.

To avoid the danger of previous R&D programs the following is suggested.

1. The Director should not be an "establishment" social scientist or educator, but rather a person who has had experience in doing research and developing educational programs for the culturally different in the U.S.

2. The composition of the council should reflect the ethnic composition of the children and adults who most need to benefit from an agency like NIE. That is, if 35 percent of the people most likely to benefit from NIE are Chicanos, then 35 percent of the council should be made up of Chicanos. People appointed to the council should include persons active in community projects as well as graduate students.

3. The institute should hire Chicanos as project officers. Chicanos should also be represented in those positions which involve reviewing proposals and supervising programs once they are funded.

4. New lines of research should be given top priority in funding programs. For some ideas see Casteneda, *et al.*, *Mexican-Americans and Educational Change*, Mexican-American Studies, University of California, Riverside; and Mazon, M.R., *Adelante: An Emerging Design for Mexican-American Education*, School of Communication, University of Texas, Austin, Texas.

I would suggest that Chicano professionals withhold their endorsement of NIE as presently constituted; that they insist that NIE make those changes necessary to make it a meaningful agency for Chicanos. In addition, I would suggest that if these changes are not forthcoming, Chicano professionals contact Congressmen asking them to help withhold appropriations for NIE until it shows signs of willingness to move in innovative directions.